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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District:	<b>Shaw Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>1511 11<sup>th</sup> Street, NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	<b>October 28, 2010</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	<b>10-492</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Eldra D. Walker</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Chris Colross of SGA Architects, on behalf of owner Kelly Miller Smith, seeks conceptual approval for a three story rooftop addition on the one story property at 1511 11<sup>th</sup> Street, NW.

**Property Description**

Constructed in 1927, the modest one story office building was designed by Murphy and Olmsted for builder and owner Cassidy and Company. Using a basic geometric form, the simplified Beaux Arts building was constructed of brick with a façade of variegated sandstone. The façade is punctuated with a Roman inspired triumphal arch flanked by 6/6 windows. The outside of the door surround has a carved rope pattern and the inside has a dentil pattern. Carved stone forms concave corbelled shoulder arches at the window openings.

**Proposal**

The proposal calls for maintaining the façade and portions of the existing sidewalls. The roof, rear wall, a portion of the sidewall to the north, and the detached garage will be demolished. The main entrance will be altered: the door will be removed creating a vestibule flanked by two doors and a fixed sash window. A three story addition, comprised of traditional building materials, brick, decorative metal panels, and double hung windows with transoms, will be added above the building. A stone cornice will crown the final composition.

**Evaluation**

The Board has generally applied the principles that a roof addition should be subordinate to the historic building to which it is being attached and that roof additions set flush with the front façade of a building are rarely appropriate. Exceptions have generally only been approved when:

- 1) The historic building could, stylistically, support additional floors;
- 2) The existing building is of nominal architectural or historical character;
- 3) A context exists which supports the larger new building;
- 4) Adjacent buildings establish a compatible context for such an addition; and
- 5) Character-defining features of the façade will not be altered or diminished.

In the designation of the Shaw Historic District, and in reviews of projects since, the Board has acknowledged that 11<sup>th</sup> Street is somewhat more compromised than the rest of the historic district in containing numerous vacant lots, a relatively large percentage of non-contributing buildings and a

fractured historic context that lacks a strong sense of history or place. As part of a study of the Shaw neighborhood undertaken by the Office of Planning in 2004-2005 (in consultation with the HPO and with significant neighborhood participation), recommendations were developed to enhance the overall character of 11<sup>th</sup> Street that are consistent with its historic designation but also which recognize the substantial possibilities for redevelopment and contemporary design. The HPRB has accordingly applied a more liberal standard for review to projects on 11<sup>th</sup> Street to encourage its redevelopment in a manner that is respectful of its historic buildings but which has also allowed for greater density.

The proposed addition is compatible with the classical proportions of the facade, yet is still differentiated. The fenestration pattern and its proportions will relieve the façade of potential heaviness. By focusing the glazing at the addition's center, while encapsulating it with brick pilasters on the edges, the addition will complement the solidly ordered fenestration of the historic building. The use of brick, instead of a more massive, denser masonry unit, will also lend a lighter presence. Despite its proposed height and placement, the proposed addition will relate to the one story property and not diminish its importance as the stabilizing component in the new composition.

The proposal has evolved into one that mitigates the loss of historic fabric, and maintains the form, volume and sense of the existing building. However, the proposal includes altering the main entrance, one of the most important features of the building. The Board's guidelines on *Windows and Doors for Historic Buildings* state "moving or blocking-up existing doors, or adding a new door to a historic building will almost always change its character. If located on the primary facade, it is critical that the proposed alteration not significantly change the character of the facade." Removing the door is antithetical to the Board's guidelines and detracts from the character of the building.

Overall, the proposal successfully presents a three story addition, in terms of massing, scale and proportions. However, the entrance should be maintained as a single door within its historic plane.

### **Recommendation**

The HPO recommends the Board advise the applicant restudy the proposal resubmitting plans to HPO when ready.